

News from the Oklahoma Army National Guard

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September 18, 2008

For Immediate Release

Three Oklahoma National Guard Soldiers lost in helicopter crash in Iraq

It was announced today the crash of an Army CH-47 helicopter in Iraq and the loss of seven Soldiers from the 149th Aviation. The Soldiers were members of both the Oklahoma and Texas National Guard. It is believed that three of the casualties were Oklahoma Guardsmen from Detachment 1, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation, from Lexington, Okla.

The Soldiers were en route from Kuwait to Balad, where the unit is based, when the crash occurred. It has been determined that the crash was not the result of hostile action and the incident is currently under investigation. More information about the crash will be released as it becomes available.

Notification of family members is complete.

"Our casualty assistance teams are currently with our family members," said Maj. Gen Harry M. Wyatt III, adjutant general of Oklahoma. "Our hearts, thoughts, prayers and support go out to their families, friends and fellow Soldiers during this difficult time."

The unit, made up of approximately 200 Texas and Oklahoma Guard members, was mobilized in June and left for duty in Iraq in late August.

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Notice to the media: As required by Public Law, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004 prohibits the release of casualty information on deceased military personnel until 24 hours after notifying the next-of-kin. The Office of the Secretary of Defense is the sole release authority for names of all categories of missing and deceased personnel related to combat operations. Military members cannot make any comments relating to casualties until the information is confirmed via DoD release (see www.defenselink.mil/news/releases.html <<http://www.defenselink.mil/news/releases.html>>). Military members will refer all calls to the State Public Affairs office at (405) 228-5212.